(c) and (d) In the context of India's future energy needs, both sides discussed the possibility of cooperation in civilian nuclear energy. Technical issues in this regard are being examined by concerned officials on both sides.

Revision of Rules relating to Haj Pilgrimage

2265. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have lately decided to revise the rules and guidelines relating to facilities granted for Haj Pilgrimage;

(b) if so, the main aspects thereof to be revised; and

(c) the main charges and modifications to be introduced as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) The Government recently reviewed the facilities granted for Haj Pilgrimage with regard to subsidy in air fare and have removed discriminatory conditions with regard to the number of pilgrimages in one's life time, status of the pilgrim as an income-tax payee and use of accomodation provided by the Haj Committee. Non income-tax payees will get higher priority for availing of subsidy in air fare.

Pendency of passport applications

2266. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for grant of new passport or applications for renewal of passports pending in various passport offices in the country;

(b) whether the regional passport offices have been increased from 21 to 30 whereas staff strength has not been increased inspite of increase in the number of passports;

(c) whether all India passport employees association has made representation to the Government; and

(d) if so, what are their demands?